

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I think it is important that we acknowledge what is going on right now. What is going on is that the most significant vote of the year is taking place. It is called the Defense authorization bill, the NDAA. It has passed every year for 60 years now. This will be the 60th year it is passed. Nothing else has a record like that.

Yet there is always trauma at the tail end, and the reason there is trauma is that everyone knows it is going to pass—and it is going to pass—so anything they can't pass during the normal process of the year, for any number of reasons, they try to put on this as an amendment. Some things are not acceptable because they have the effect of killing the bill.

Now, we have two people who have been working with the committees putting this thing together. I know that the Presiding Officer knows this, but these people have worked an entire year and many, many more than half the weekends. People have this idea that people don't work in Washington on causes. They do on this one.

John Bonsell in my office has been the director, the support of the bill, with Liz King on the Democratic side. They have worked hand in hand together. People talk about how Democrats and Republicans fight with each other. Not on this bill. We all support it. We all want it. We all want to make sure it is done and it is done right.

So we have a defense authorization bill. It will be the largest one that we have had in the history of the Defense authorization bills. It is one that, without it, we are not going to be able to take care of our kids in the field.

We have to remember that, while there are a lot of hitchhikers on this bill on causes that we have determined to be worthwhile causes, we don't do it if it is going to be something that will take down the bill. So we want to make sure that nothing would jeopardize passing the Defense authorization bill.

Now, the key is December 31 of this year. If we don't have the bill passed by December 31 of this year, I mentioned that we have problems, that any of the specialist groups—and I talk about the pilots; I talk about those involved in hazard occupations—the SEALs—the individuals who are out there risking their lives to a greater extent than others do in the military. And they are out there doing it for this reason, and we want to make sure that they are willing to take these risks. We want to make sure that we are taking good care of people.

I run into people all the time who say: You are always so concerned about our military. Yet the chief competition that we have is with whom: Russia and China? Russia and China actually, after the last administration—that was the Obama administration. In the last

5 years—that would be from 2010 to 2015—he knocked down the military budget by 25 percent. It had never happened before—not since World War II anyway. Yet we found ourselves in a situation where we couldn't compete.

Now, they will argue with you, and they will say: Well, we spend more money on defense than Russia and China put together. That is true, but there is a big difference, and that is that in Communist countries they don't care about taking care of their troops. Our job is to make sure that our kids have a prosperous career. They want to defend their country, but they also have families. They have to take care of their families.

Housing has been a huge problem in the military, so we want to make sure that we have good housing for our troops—not just here in the United States but around the world—and we are doing that.

Now, in Communist countries they give them a gun and say: Go out and kill people. They don't care about the troops. They don't spend any of that money.

So the largest expense, the largest ticket on running a military operation is taking care of the people. So that is why it is important that people understand this.

There is also a document that nobody reads anymore. It is called the Constitution. You read that and say: What are we supposed to be doing in Washington? We get involved in so many different things. Yet, when you read the Constitution, it says that our primary concern should be to defend against an outside enemy, and then other areas—transportation and a few other areas—are mentioned. But the No. 1 concern is that we have to have a military that is second to none. We want to make sure.

Let me say this about our President. When he first came into office, President Trump recognized what had happened to our military and had recognized that there are things like hypersonic—that is a very recent, modern technology that they are working on in China and Russia and other places, and we are actually behind them at this time.

People assume that America has better everything in the military than China has and Russia has, and that is not true. They have artillery systems that are better than the artillery systems that we currently have.

So we have a job that I consider to be the most significant job—significant job for the defense of our country, and it is just that: to defend our country.

I want to applaud all of these people who work long hours. We are now to the point where they are what they call turning the page. We are ready to pass a bill. We are in the process of getting signatures from the committees.

There are a lot of people who don't like the idea of having to sign a bill and sign on to a bill, yet they know that in order to maintain a superior position over China and Russia, we

have to do that, and we have to show our superiority, and we have to make it last. That is what we are doing right now. It is a very significant time.

I anticipate that we are going to be able to get this done, and I applaud the President for the time that he has spent and the money that he has spent on rebuilding our military. You hear him say all the time that we now have the strongest military that we have ever had and we are in great shape. But we are still rebuilding. We still have areas where our adversaries have better equipment than we do.

So that is what is going on today. That is what is taking place. It is a very proud time that we can say that we are now addressing those things that are the most significant things going on in Washington today.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the postcloture time on the Waller nomination expire at 11:30 a.m. tomorrow and the Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination; I further ask that if cloture is invoked on the Hardy nomination, the postcloture time expire at 1:45 p.m. tomorrow and the Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination; finally, that if any of the nominations are confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ALS DISABILITY INSURANCE ACCESS ACT OF 2019

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I have an amendment to offset the costs to the Social Security's disability insurance trust fund associated with S. 578. Eventhough my amendment did not gain the 60 vote threshold, I want my colleagues to know that you just can't tap into the Social Security disability trust funds without dire future consequences.